THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHRIRAM CHAUHAN): (a) Uniform specification of paddy and rice are laid down every year before the commencement of Kharif Marketing Season for procurement of paddy and rice for the Central Pool, after taking into consideration the views of the State Government and the Food Corporation of India (FCI) and also keeping in view the weather and crop conditions, stock position in the Central Pool, PFA standards, etc.

(b) and (c) The Government of Punjab had requested for relaxation in rice specification for Kharif Marketing Season 1999-2000 as under:—

1. To allow Small Brokers at 2% within the overall limit of Broken grains.

2. To enhance the limit of Damaged/Slightly Damaged Grains up to 3.5% in raw rice.

3. To enhance the maximum limit for Dehusked Grains upto 15%.

4. To allow Moisture upto 15% without any value cut.

The request of Government of Punjab was examined. However, keeping in view the interest of the consumers and also, the prolonged storage the rice may have to undergo, the relaxations sought by Government of Punjab were not agreed to.

Food Deficiency and Maternal Mortality in India

3666. SHRI SURESH KALMADI:
MISS MABEL REBELLO:

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that despite a substantial increase in foodgrains production during the 50 years of independence, half the world's hungry people are in India which is still classified by the Food and Agriculture Organisation as a "low income and food-deficit country";

(b) whether it is also a fact that maternal mortality rate among the Indian women is one of the highest in the world; and

(c) if so, the steps Government plan to overcome this problem?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHRIRAM CHAUHAN): (a) According to a FAO publication people who do not have enough to eat are termed as "undernourished". As per FAO, around 790 million people in developing world and 34 million in developed world are undernourished. Regarding India, the number of undernourished people has been estimated at 204.4 million by FAO. However, as per the Ninth Plan document of Planning Commission, percentage of persons without two square meals a day for some months of the year is often termed as the "hunger ratio". As per our Ninth Plan document, about 19 percent of the rural population and 7 percent of the urban population remained hungry in 1983 and, as per the latest available information, these have come down to about 5 percent in rural areas and 2 percent in urban areas in 1993-94.

(b) There are no regular and comparable data available on maternal mortality ratio in India. The Sample registration Survey 1997 estimated the maternal mortality ratio at 408 per one lakh live birth. This is one of the highest in the world.

(c) The Department of Family Welfare is currently implementing the Reproductive and Child Health Programme which aims at reducing the maternal mortality and morbidity in India. Through this programme, it endeavours to provide essential and emergency obstretic care, promote institutional deliveries, promote safe domiciliary deliveries through trained and traditional birth attendants, providing referral transportation for pregnant women, improving access to safe abortion services and introduce treatment for reproductive track infection, sexually transmitted infection and prophelaxis against nutritional anaemia.

Import/Export of Sugar

3667. SHRIMATI BASANTI SARMA: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) the total quantity of sugar imported during the last five years; and

(b) the total quantity of sugar exported during this period?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI V. SREENIVASA PRASAD): (a) and (b) As per Directorate General of Commercial